

**From:** bob frost  
**To:** Microsoft ATR  
**Date:** 11/20/01 11:31am  
**Subject:** Microsoft settlement

Dear persons:

As an information professional and educator, I am in no small degree dismayed by the settlement agreement recently negotiated between Microsoft and the Justice Department in the Microsoft anti-trust case. Having also been trained in the economics of industrial organization, I understand such law pretty well, and to me it is clear that Microsoft's violations of the Sherman and Clayton Acts, particularly with respect to tying and predation, are not sufficiently addressed by the remedies proposed.

I worry most, however, that the agreement does almost nothing to prevent Microsoft from repeating on the Internet what it did with operating systems. That is, by dint of its control over the PC operating system, Microsoft effectively destroyed its competition in the sphere of software applications. Using its control over operating system source code and application programming interfaces (APIs), Microsoft gained control over the entire PC platform. Here's a list:

Spreadsheets: was Lotus 123, now Microsoft Excel  
Word-processing: was WordPerfect, now Microsoft Word  
Databases: was dBaseIII and FoxPro, now Microsoft Access  
Email: was Eudora and many others, now Microsoft Outlook and Entourage

You will note, I hope, that almost all of the original competition not only lost product dominance, many such firms also went out of business or were acquired by others in dire circumstances. By a sharp reduction in the competition, Microsoft has therefore effectively quashed innovation in microcomputing applications. While one might claim, as the Bush Justice Department, that such is the way of legitimate competition, earlier findings of fact in this case indicate otherwise and no credible remedies are proposed.

With its emerging ".NET" strategy, Microsoft is overtly planning the same strategy for next-generation Internet-based software. With the very recent release of Windows XP, that approach is overt, as, for example, Microsoft implements code that not only precludes the use of competing products (Apple's Quicktime, Real's RealAudio, and Sun's Java), it uses its market share to undermine open and global Net standards carefully and at length designed, negotiated, and affirmed by almost all relevant non-Microsoft players

Finally, in this time of heightened fears about security and privacy, I must note that consumers are systematically damaged and such damage will

grow in the future?by Microsoft?s notoriously insecure products. Over the past several months there has been a raft of costly security holes discovered in Microsoft server software, among them the costly Nimda and RedAlert virii. Worse, just last week, Microsoft had to disable large portions of its new ?Passport? authentication service due to security concerns. Passport is, in simple terms, a repository and serving system for the personal data used in e-commerce. It is integrated into Windows XP. As Microsoft in the future will undoubtedly use its market muscle to impose Passport as the authentication standard for e-commerce, consumers will be in constant danger of leaks of their personal information. In addition, by dint of its control of the Passport database, Microsoft will become the largest repository of consumer information in the world. Given its past abuses of law and minimal respect for others, I simply would not trust Microsoft to safeguard consumers? vital interests; rather, I can assure you that if there is money to be made in mishandling personal information by Microsoft, they will do so.

In conclusion, it is my deeply held belief that the proposed anti-trust settlement in the DOJ v. Microsoft case is unacceptable. Innovation will continue to be stifled, consumer security will be compromised, and software prices will remain at high, monopoly-based levels. I beg your office to reject the agreement. Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

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Associate Professor of Information

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Women's mobilization: the best way to defeat fundamentalists of all kinds--Islamic or Christian.